

How God Moved This Blind Nana From Jealousy to Joy

Shame on me. Rather than enjoying my friends' company during lunch at our favorite restaurant, traces of envy and self-pity attacked me.

"Oh, he's adorable. He looks just like his dad," one of them said. The other pulled out her cell phone, "Look at him; cake icing all over his little face. First birthdays are so much fun."

They all gushed over each picture of their grandchildren.

"He loves the books I read to him," a friend said, "and you should see how excited he gets when I take him to the park."

Read books? Take them to the park? I faked a smile. Inside I cursed the retinal disease that robbed my sight decades ago. Unable to see, I was destined to miss all the delights of being a grandmother.

The day soon came when I was about to find out. Hubby and I received the phone call from our son. "It's a girl. She weighs 8 pounds, 9 ounces and has lots of black hair."

I jumped to my feet, my heart beating fast at the good news. Hubby and I rushed to the hospital. He held my hand as we walked down the long corridors. And although he was guiding me, my steps went ahead of his.

Once in the room, I could hardly contain my squeal. "Can I hold her?"

I leaned toward the bed and my daughter-in-law placed the warm bundle in my arms.

She didn't move, and as her tiny head rested on my arm, with

gentle strokes, my fingers found her small forehead. I brushed my fingertips across her silky hair, then down to her velvety cheek.

A Thunder of Emotions

I'd never know what she looks like. I'd never see how her smile makes her face shine. I'd never know if she's looking at me, or reaching for me.

How will she react when she learns her grandma is blind?

Tears burned my eyes. And as they fell, all in the room thought they were of joy, but the sudden reality that my grandmother days would be filled with frustration crushed me.

Months flew by, she cooed, and giggled—a delight to my soul. Then just as she was about to turn 1, her steps began. Her daddy leaned toward me. “She’s taking one or two steps toward you.”

I extended my arms in her direction and her little hand grabbed my index finger. I drew her close, hugged her tight and twirled her in the air. “Good job, you did it!”

Weeks later, those steps multiplied, and running became her favorite thing. But when she tumbled, her whimpers tugged at me to rush over and rescue her. But without sight, I couldn't.

‘Lord, How Will I Do This?’

And as I fought tears, God's promise echoed in me: “Now to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or imagine, according to the power that works in us” (Eph. 3:20).

Would His power be enough to overcome my blindness? As her whimpers came from across the room, I extended my arms toward her direction, “C'mon, sweet girl., Nana will make you feel better.”

I couldn't go to her, but she could come to me.

When she did, I brushed her tear off her cheek. As I gave her a tight squeeze, I also embraced God's promise that His power was indeed at work in me to do more than I imagined.

I decided to test this promise. I looked toward my son and his wife. "If you ever need me," I hesitated, "I can keep her and take care of her."

Would they trust me? Would they trust my care with my sight limitations? I held my breath. But their enthusiastic acceptance made my heart smile.

A Richer Life

But what made my life richer were the days I had her all to myself. I found ways to keep track of her.

I took her by the hand and sat her on my lap. "Sit still, sweet thing," I said as I pinned a couple of small jingle bells on her blouse.

She hopped down and took off. And as I expected, my ears followed the jingle telling me where she was.

With each week, each month, she learned to handle her nana. When navigating through the house, I extended my hand, and immediately, her little hand slipped into mine. She didn't know it, but she led me around.

Delighted, I let her take me any place she chose. We stopped and often sat on the floor, legs crisscrossed. That's when all my senses devoted to her. The books I read to her weren't written on paper. They were written in my own imagination.

Each created story included a message, a lesson and a new revelation of what Jesus can do.

"Did you know Jesus healed the blind?" I said, "Your nana is

blind too, and Jesus healed her also, in a different way. He showed her to see with her heart.”

Would she understand that concept? It didn't matter. She would have to see for herself how Jesus guides, teaches and provides.

And He did.

The Joy of Being Nana

One morning she made her usual request. “A smoothie, Nana.”

I scooped her up and placed her in her high chair. Snapping the tray in place was easy enough.

Then I headed to the fridge. Using my fingertips to find the items, I pulled them out—a container of pineapple chunks, blueberries, frozen bananas and the carton of almond milk.

I placed them on the counter, and one by one dropped all ingredients in the blender, careful to add just enough almond milk.

“You'll love this, sweet girl,” I said as I found the button to start the blender.

Little legs bounced against the high chair with excitement.

Once I poured it in her cup, cautious not to make it overflow, I inserted a straw. Then with my fingers, found the center of her tray. “Here you go, my precious.”

Her delicate hands held the cup. “Thank you, Nana,” she said in her high-pitched voice.

“No, sweet baby,” my heart wanted to say. “Thank you for showing me the joy of being your nana.”

I sang songs to her when I changed her diaper. And while I got her dressed. Sometimes, I learned that the clothes I put on

her didn't match. She didn't seem to care. I didn't either. We concentrated on serious playing instead.

It Wasn't All Play

When I accidentally bumped into an object, she stopped, and in an angelic voice she asked, "You OK, Nana?"

At 20 months old, did she already know the importance of compassion?

I groped for my shoes, unable to find them.

"Nana's shoes," she said as she quickly found them and attempted to put them on my feet. Had she already learned to help those in need?

When she handed me something, she first called my name, then placed the item in my hand. Without me teaching her, had she learned to overcome her nana's limitations?

One afternoon, thunder roared outside, and we listened with awe. I pointed toward the sky and told her about the clouds. When the storm subsided, I scooped her in my arms and walked outside into a drizzling rain. "Look up, baby girl," I said. "That's rain. Feel how it tickles your face?"

I inhaled an exaggerated deep breath. "Smell that? That's the scent of a wet earth. It's good and fresh. God gave us the sense of smell."

Sweet Imaginations

And God had also given me a way to take her for a ride. She climbed on my back and giggled when her Nana bucked like a horse.

But there were no horses when we went to a safari adventure. Seated on my lap, I pointed up, "Look up there, in that tree, a hairy monkey is swinging from the branch."

"I see it, too," she said.

And look what's coming on this side, a tall giraffe ..."

She gave squeals with each animal we pretended to see as we rode the vehicle of our imagination.

But what was truly real was the way God showed me that love requires no sight. Bonding needs no material things. And delightful moments need nothing but a profound belief that God gives us eyes to see beyond limitations, obstacles or barriers.

We overcame them. And for me, no more feelings of envy or self-pity. Instead, with joy overflowing, she and I still sit on the couch of mutual love. And through Jesus' eyes, we both see the wonders of this world.

Let's Pray

Father, thank you for Your compassionate heart to see what we need, when we needed it and how You'll provide. Thank You for the delightful moments You give us when we choose to see our life through Your promises. In Jesus' name, amen.

What will you accomplish with the power of God at work within you? {eoa}

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